

DIOCESAN NEWS

First lay president appointed to Bishop Kearney

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — Mark S. Peterson, former vice president for external relations and chief operating officer of Telecom Inc., a Rochester-based fund-raising firm, has been named the first lay president of Bishop Kearney High School. The school is sponsored by the Christian Brothers, a religious order based in New Rochelle, N.Y.

Peterson's hiring was announced at a June 22 press conference at the school. He replaces Brother Raymond Vercruyse, CFC, president since 1991. Brother Vercruyse plans to pursue a doctorate in Catholic school leadership at the University of San Francisco. During his time as president, Kearney added a computer center, renovated the auditorium and began a gymnasium renovation project.

A parishioner at St. John of Rochester Church in Perinton, Peterson, 39, is a Syracuse native who lives in West Henrietta with his wife, Kathleen, and three daughters: Shannon, 12, Megan, 8, and Erin, 3. A 1983 graduate of St. John Fisher College, Rochester, Peterson also has a master's in business administration from Kent State University in Ohio.

Peterson said that his strong Catholic faith made him eager to work at Kearney.

"I've told people I felt led by the Lord to be here," he said.

He also said that Kearney represents an opportunity to work with young people in an era when the nation's moral climate seems fraught with difficulty. He pointed to last year's Columbine High School massacre in Colorado as an example of what can happen when teenagers don't receive the proper moral formation.

"I don't think there's ever been a time where a values-based education is more important than now."

As president, Peterson said, he will focus on increasing Kearney's enrollment, re-



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Newly-appointed Bishop Kearney High School President Mark S. Peterson introduces, from right, his daughters Megan, 8, and Erin, 3, his wife, Kathleen, and daughter Shannon, 12, at a press conference at Bishop Kearney on June 22. With them is Brother Raymond Vercruyse, CFC, who is leaving his position as Kearney president after nine years.

taining faculty and seeking new sources of private funding. Peterson said he would like to see enrollment eventually increase from the current 441 students to between 500 and 600. Currently, Kearney has a student/teacher ratio of 14:1, and school officials want to keep small classroom sizes, he added.

Brother Vercruyse noted that the vast majority of Kearney's students come from Northeastern Catholic Junior High School, which is operated by the Diocese of Rochester and is in the same building as the high school. Peterson commented that one of his goals will be to broaden and diversify the pool of students coming to Kearney by promoting the high school to students at other schools.

Peterson also noted that he would like to change the perception among teachers that Kearney is a place for new teachers to work until they find better-paying jobs in the public sector or corporate world. In particular, he wants to encourage math and science teachers to stay at the school rather than seek jobs in the private sector. Kearney will have to look at the possibility of salary increases for teachers, he said.

The school also needs to consult the current faculty to determine the nonfinancial incentives for teaching at a Catholic school, he said, musing that these must include a disciplined classroom environment. Such characteristics should be encouraged and

used as reasons to persuade faculty to stay, he noted.

"I want them to be proud of teaching at Kearney," he said. "I want it to be hard for them to (decide) to leave even if they're offered a great opportunity with great money."

Peterson added that he wanted to develop the school's donor base by promoting it to corporations, foundations and individual donors.

"We're like the best-kept secret on the planet," he said. "We need to not be kept a secret."

Ken McAlpin, chairman-elect of the school's board of trustees, said Peterson was the ideal candidate for the president's position. McAlpin said the school wanted a president with experience in fundraising and marketing to continue the pattern of growth the school has experienced in the past few years.

"We're on a roll, and we want to keep it going," he said.

The hiring of Peterson is the latest in a series of moves the school has made to increase lay involvement since the Christian Brothers sold the school to the lay board of trustees in July 1999. The sale was made with the understanding that the school would continue to uphold the brothers' values and traditions, and was done in response to the declining numbers of brothers available to staff the institution.

Brother Vercruyse is one of four brothers who worked at the school this year, and next fall, only two will remain on staff, he said. The brother said he was pleased with the choice of Peterson as the school's first lay president, and said he believed the school will continue to transmit the values of the Christian Brothers to its students.

"The groundwork has been left in good shape for the president and the board to do the work beyond," he said.

Bishop denies St. Francis appeal

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has denied an appeal filed by parishioners at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Rochester to stop the closing of their parish.

The bishop announced his decision June 27. The parishioners have 15 business days to lodge recourse against the decree with the Vatican.

"This decision has not been an easy one but one that I feel is necessary given the evolving circumstances of ministry in this area..." the bishop wrote in a letter to those who had filed the appeal.

Joe Benvenuto, a parishioner who supported the appeal, said the parishioners would appeal the bishop's decision.

The parish will close July 1. But the church building will remain open. Legally, the parish is being "suppressed," explained Father Kevin McKenna, diocesan chancellor.

"It will no longer be recognized as a center for all those things that are associated

with parish life," Father McKenna noted. But the building will continue to be used this summer as a worship site on a limited basis.

The Sunday noon Masses in Spanish and 8 a.m. Friday Masses in English will continue to be celebrated there for a while, according to Father Paul Tomasso, pastor of St. Francis. Funerals also may take place at the church.

The parish is surveying 180 parishioner households as to which church they would like to join, to determine where the Spanish Mass will be celebrated and where the parish records will go. Also, Father Tomasso noted, a tenant has not been found, "and we don't want to leave the building without a tenant."

Attempts are being made to schedule a final Mass or prayer service around the Aug. 15 date of the parish's founding in 1929, according to Father Tomasso. Bishop Clark has been invited to attend.

Recognizing

Students at several Monroe County Catholic and public schools participated in a variety of fundraisers to pay for the construction of Flower City Habitat for Humanity Inc.'s 100th house. The corporation builds homes for low-income people. On June 9, teachers from the participating schools raised a wall for the house, located on Brown Street, Rochester, and students wrote the names of their schools on the wall. Students who helped to raise \$55,000 for the home attended these Catholic schools: All Saints Catholic Junior High and St. Helen's in Gates; Holy Trinity and St. Rita's in Webster; Seton Catholic, Brighton; St. Charles Borromeo and St. Lawrence, Greece; St. Monica's and Nazareth Hall Elementary in Rochester; and McQuaid Jesuit High and Our Lady of Mercy High in Brighton.

Meaghan Doyle and Jessica Gregory, both juniors at Our Lady of Mercy High School, were among 22 Monroe County area high school students honored as "Varsity Volunteers" by Camp Good Days and Special Times at a brunch at the Burgundy Basin Inn in Pittsford May 20. The camp serves children and families affected by cancer, HIV/AIDS, violence and other ills. The camp's Varsity Volunteer program recognizes young people who "make a difference in our community."

The Monthly Prayer Request For Priests

Will you pray for a priest each day?

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

O Jesus! Eternal Priest, Keep these Thy holy ones within the shelter of Thy Sacred Heart where none may harm them. Keep unstained their anointed hands which daily touch Thy Sacred Body.

Keep unsullied their lips purple with Thy Precious Blood. Keep pure and unearthly their hearts sealed with the sublime marks of Thy glorious Priesthood. Bless their labors with abundant fruit; and may they to whom they have ministered be here below their joy and consolation, and in Heaven their everlasting crown. Amen.

Prayer Suggestions: Mass, Rosary, Fasting, Day Offering, Eucharistic Adoration, Offering Sufferings, Divine Mercy Chaplet

July, 2000

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					Revs.	Bishop Matthew H. Clark 1
2 Pope John Paul II	3 Inactive Priests	4 Peter T. Bayer	5 James E. Boyle	6 Robert L. Belgotti	7 Joseph F. Brodnick	8 Patrick L. Connor
9 John A. Firpo	10 Daniel J. Condon	11 David N. Gramkee	12 Matthew A. Kawiak	13 Thomas D. Hctor	14 Robert J. Kennedy	15 Roy R. Kiggins
16 Anthony P. Mugavero	17 William F. Laird	18 Thomas P. Mull	19 William D. Lum	20 Robert G. Kreckel	21 Robert F. O'Neill	22 Eric C. Phillips
23 Edward L. Palumbos	24 David P. Simon	25 Gary L. Tyman	26 William V. Spilly	27 Walter L. Wainwright	28 Thomas H. Watts	29 Thomas H. Wheeland
30 Vocations	31 Seminarians					

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